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ABSTRACT

This study examined the proposition that if teacher professional development focuses on ways of thinking and teacher action, it will facilitate the ongoing implementation of opportunity-to-learn (OTL) assessment strategies rated as "teacher-friendly" and "very teacher-friendly." Case study methodology was used to investigate teachers' learning and to apply OTL assessment strategies in two urban elementary schools in Washington, D.C. Six OTL assessment strategies were presented to teachers in workshops over several months. Teachers rated the assessment strategies that were introduced for ease of use. Although they considered all the strategies they were taught "teacher-friendly," the networking and collaborating assessment strategy captured the ongoing support of all teachers. Levels of demonstrated leadership appeared to play an important role in the adoption of this strategy. Student achievement scores in these schools appeared to improve with the adoption of the networking and collaborating assessment strategy. (Contains 3 tables and 14 references.) (SLD)

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Case Studies of Teachers Learning and Applying Opportunity to Learn Assessment Strategies In Two Urban Elementary Schools

by
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INTRODUCTION

For several years, opportunity to learn (OTL) research was limited to determining whether there was content coverage (students covered the core curriculum). Questions about content coverage arose from such large-scale surveys as NAEP, SIMS, and when researchers were planning the Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS). Therefore, in 1993, OTL was expanded into a conceptual framework that included content coverage and three additional variables: (1) content exposure—enough time is allocated for in-depth teaching and for students' time-on task; (2) content emphasis—topics are selected that are part of core curriculum and taught to all students; and (3) quality of instructional delivery—lessons presented are coherent so students are able to understand and use the information earned. All of these variables are closely related to what teachers do in their classrooms when teaching (Stevens, 1993a), and classroom activities are connected logically and sequentially with a beginning, middle, and end.

The next step following the development of the OTL conceptual framework was to transform the research to procedural knowledge. In other words, through a nationwide survey of teachers, we investigated which OTL assessment strategies were teacher friendly (e.g., used on a daily basis) and then taught teachers through professional development how to use these strategies in their schools and classrooms. Results from the survey indicated that the teachers found most of the OTL assessment strategies to be teacher-friendly or sustainable over time. They did not find the strategies burdensome to implement. Also, the teachers indicated that they would implement or were already implementing some of the strategies in their classrooms (Stevens, et al., 1998).

The strategy for OTL workshops was to avoid the replication of traditional professional development, described as relatively short-term and involving teachers in several hours or days of workshops that later had a very low teacher implementation level of 15% (Goldenberg &

Gallimore, 1991; Meyer, 1988). Instead, the workshops attempted to adopt the qualities that several researchers advocated as needed in educational professional development processes, mainly:

- to be school-wide and context-specific
- to have supportive school principals who endorse the process and encourage change
- to be long-term with adequate support and follow-up, and
- to encourage collegiality (Fullan, 1990; Griffin, 1986; Loucks-Horsley, et al., 1987; McLaughlin, 1991).

In addition, professional development should focus on ways of thinking and teacher action rather than behaviors (Gallagher, Goudvis, & Pearson, 1988). Lieberman (1996) states that if professional development is to enable teachers to really change the way they work, then teachers must have opportunities to talk, think, try, and hone new practices.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The research seeks to examine the proposition that if professional development focuses on ways of thinking and teacher action, it will facilitate the ongoing implementation of those OTL assessment strategies rated as *teacher-friendly* and *very teacher-friendly*.

Methods and Procedures

Case study methodology was used to investigate a contemporary phenomenon (teachers learning and applying OTL assessment strategies) within its real-life context (in two urban elementary schools) when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context were not clearly evident. The research questions were basically *how* and *why* (Lin, 1989). For this case study, the researcher attempted to respond to four questions through observations, on-going dialogue,

interviews with principals, document analysis, and evaluative questionnaires. The questions included:

1. How did teachers view the OTL assessment strategies after they practiced and implemented them in their classrooms?
2. How did teachers view the level of teacher-friendliness of the strategies after practicing and implementing them?
3. Were there obstacles to implementing the strategies in the schools and classrooms?
4. What factors encouraged long-term, ongoing implementation of the OTL assessment strategies in classrooms; and more specifically, what role did the school principal play in the implementation and ongoing execution of the strategies?

The researcher acted as the leader for the OTL assessment strategies workshops in the schools once a month from January through May and continued with follow-up visits in June to check the level of strategy implementation after the workshops had ended. The schools being studied were two low-achieving elementary schools in Washington, D.C. The study takes the research perspective that through case study research, it can include quantitative data (i.e., norm-referenced test scores) and qualitative data (i.e., questionnaires, interviews, etc.). Therefore, data were collected from the following sources:

- workshop participants who completed end-of-workshop session evaluation forms
- workshop discussions with participants
- end-of-workshop feedback sessions with participants
- interviews with teachers, teacher-facilitators, and school principals
- informal conversations with school staff
- observation of the school environments, and
- examination of school documents.

Background

The two schools chosen were part of the original five schools identified for intervention because of student low achievement in reading and mathematics. At the behest of the then Washington, D.C., superintendent of schools, the schools were implementing an intervention model from Temple University's Mid-Atlantic Educational Regional Laboratory for Student Success (LSS). The Community for Learning (CFL) model with its Adaptive Learning Environments Model (ALEM) component stressed individual learning plans for students, interactive teaching, arranging space and facilities (e.g., learning centers), on-site professional development, and a full-time instruction-focused teacher-facilitator assigned to each school (Wang, 1992).

The investigator was invited to lead workshops about Opportunity to Learn (OTL) assessment strategies to supplement the work of the schools' reform efforts. There were six OTL assessment strategies presented:

1. Using networking and collaborating to improve instructional practices
2. Keeping journals
3. Assessing students' mastery of skills and concepts
4. Conducting observations for constructive feedback
5. Conducting surveys about teaching practices, and
6. Conducting surveys about school resources needed for effective teaching.

These strategies grew from research about opportunity to learn (Stevens, 1993b; Bailey, 1996; Stevens, et al., 1998). Each teacher and the school administrators were provided with their own OTL assessment strategies handbook to use at each workshop session and for follow-up work.

Describing the School Environment

School #1: One school was located in the Northwest section of Washington, D.C., within walking distance of Union Station. It was surrounded on all sides by housing projects. Inside, the school was very clean and the walls were decorated with students' work. This school's students totaled 631 and were principally African American/Black. Most of the 33 teachers were African American. Sixteen of the teachers were permanent. Auxiliary positions included three physical education teachers, a counselor, a librarian, and an English as a Second Language (ESL) teacher for students who spoke Spanish and French. In addition to the school principal, there was an assistant principal. Many students were part of several generations of families who lived in the housing projects and attended the elementary school.

The principal described the staff as being very complacent when she had arrived three years ago. She had perceived the teachers as not wanting to change and some were rebellious against her push for change. The principal said that she did a lot of talking about change, re-tooling, and creating options. Her evaluation is that the majority of the staff has grown and matured together while others have left. She and her staff have since developed positive working relationships and understand each other's philosophies and goals.

However, the principal described the staff as being hurt and angry when the school was identified for intervention. As part of the intervention process, a teacher-facilitator was assigned to the school to assist teachers to do a better job through implementing the ALEM component in their classrooms. After the initial feelings of anger and resentment toward a person assigned to "help" them, the faculty began to see the positive side of having a teacher-facilitator work with them and having on-site training provided for them.

The teacher-facilitator described her role in implementing the ALEM component of the Community for Learning (CFL) school reform intervention as providing a lot of training and mentoring. She said that the principal viewed her as in charge of instruction, although she doubted that the principal would verbally say this. She felt that the teachers viewed her as being their advocate and as being very supportive and helpful to them. The researcher observed that the teacher-facilitator was very positive about her role and enthusiastic about the help she was providing to the teachers.

School # 2: The second school was located in the Southeast section of Washington, D.C., surrounded on three sides by housing projects. The buildings were over 50 years old but they appeared to be newer from the outside because of the white brick architecture. It was a very clean school, no trash or graffiti was visible. The floors of the buildings were shiny from wax and the walls had attractive displays of children's school work. Bulletin boards told of the school's motto and vision, students were recognized for perfect attendance, and for being student scholars. There were themes dealing with Africa and African Americans. There were messages of encouragement and pride for the students and their parents displayed throughout the school. A parents' learning center was on the second floor of one of the buildings. The students numbered 525 and most were African American/Black. There were 24 classroom teachers who were also principally African American and eight other educators/resource teachers—librarian, counselor, art teacher, science teacher, physical education teacher, mathematics teacher, music teacher and reading teacher. There was an assistant principal. Half of the classroom teachers were permanent. Three teachers were first-year teachers.

The principal came to the school three years ago. She described some of the teachers as initially temperamental and immature. She felt there were two major instructional problems:

teachers were limited to whole group instruction; and there was a lack of academic progress for students completing the third grade.

The teacher-facilitator felt that when she first came to the school, the teachers were suspicious of her, but she is now accepted by over 90% of them. However, a few continue to periodically influence other teachers to react negatively to her. She stated that she is not sure what to expect from day to day and must be careful what she says because it is sometimes misconstrued. She recalled that her first year was "rough" getting to know the principal and the teachers since she was initially viewed as an "outsider" sent by the school district. The teacher-facilitator stated that at the end of the first year of installing the ALEM model, the teachers began to feel pride in their work. They acknowledged that the past year had been good and they were now ready to move on. The researcher found that the teacher-facilitator at school #2 was very concerned that her efforts as a facilitator would result in improved academic achievement of the students. The researcher observed that the teacher-facilitator was frustrated by her perceptions of lack of support from the school principal. For example, the school principal would not assign a computer to her when new ones became available and so she had to share the vice-principal's computer or use her personal computer at home.

How OTL Assessment Strategies Workshop Sessions Were Conducted

The workshop leader came to the two schools in January of the second year of the intervention and made monthly visits until the end of May. Teachers were initially wary of the leader because the principal of each school had accepted the idea of having the OTL workshops, but had not discussed the workshops with the teachers. When the workshop leader arrived for the first workshop sessions at the two schools, the teachers were polite while not wholly receptive to

the idea of attending OTL assessment strategies workshops. However, as the sessions continued, the teachers' attitudes became more and more positive. Their positive evaluations of the sessions mirrored their behavior in the sessions. In the beginning, the leader spent a lot of time cultivating acceptance by reassuring teachers about their professionalism and listening to the teachers cite their concerns and complaints about the students, the school district, and, at one school, the principal. Each month, the investigator gave a workshop on one of the assessment strategies.

The first workshop topic was *Using Networking and Collaborating to Improve Instructional Practices*. Participants were asked to read the definitions of networking and collaborating found in their workbooks. Next, appointed teacher-participants were asked to read aloud the research about networking and collaborating. Then the teachers were asked to form groups according to their grade level. The first activity was to meet in their groups and list the achievement problems in their school. Next, they were assigned to read a case study found in the workbook about a school district with student achievement problems and to review the opportunity to learn variables (i.e., content coverage, content emphasis, content exposure, and quality of instructional delivery). Using the case study information and the OTL information, the teachers in each grade level group were asked to generate and list possible strategies/solutions that address the reading and mathematics achievement problems in the case study. A representative from each group was asked to share the information about the strategies/solutions generated within the entire workshop group.

The investigator observed that the workshop activities were catalysts in having teachers meet and discuss instructional problems. As the investigator moved from group to group, the discussions were lively and focused on problem-solving. One teacher commented that this was a new experience for her and her teacher colleagues to meet solely to discuss issues of instruction.

The workshop leader then assigned a follow-up activity to move teachers from the workshop activity to their own school's educational problems. The assignment was for the teachers to meet within their grade levels and list the achievement problems in their school. They then chose from among the problems one in particular that their team would work to address. To prepare them for their grade level meeting, the entire workshop group reviewed Schmoker's model for an efficient meeting and they were asked to use this model when they convened their grade level meetings (Schmoker, 1996). Each grade level was to select one team member to report their work at the next professional development session.

The investigator observed that by assigning "homework" to the teachers in each of the grade levels and allowing at least three weeks for them to meet prior to the next workshop, the possibility of implementation of networking and collaborating outside of the workshop environment was greatly increased. Also, the knowledge that they would be expected to report back to their teacher peers increased the need for accountability from the groups. At the next meeting, before going to a new topic, the group leaders reported their identified problems. There was discussion about the overlap of problems identified at each school and a decision to share the list with each school principal for further planning and addressing.

The professional development procedural format followed for each of the monthly session topics was that teachers learned the definitions of and research on the topic; teachers discussed the OTL assessment strategy; teachers performed assigned activities or practices during the workshop; teachers were assigned homework and were given enough time between sessions to implement the strategy; and teachers reported the results of the OTL assessment strategy's practice/implementation at the next professional development session.

The Workshop Leader's Role in Encouraging the Implementation of the OTL Assessment Strategies

It was observed that over time a very positive rapport evolved among the workshop leader, the school principals, the teacher-facilitators, and the teachers. Part of the success of the workshops could be attributed to the workshop leader having been a school teacher. She could relate her own school experiences with those of the teachers in the workshops. When the discussions or teachers' opinions were not beneficial to good instructional practices or to building attitudes that were positive, the workshop leader firmly advocated "good practices" through reviewing research on the topic and/or soliciting the consensus of the group. One good practice espoused was instructional planning as a prerequisite to an effective lesson presentation. In this respect, one workshop teacher-participant expressed her anger at the school principal for requiring that lesson plans be on hand in her classroom. The teacher complained that she had been a teacher for over 20 years and her plans were in her head and written lessons plans were unnecessary. When the workshop leader did not agree with the teacher and supported the principal, several teachers lent their support by responding to the teacher's statement by asking, "Did she leave her head at school when she was absent and the substitute teacher needed the plans?" The workshop participants seemed to appreciate that they were viewed by the workshop leader as professionals who were intelligent, knowledgeable, and able to analyze information.

The two-and-one-half-hour workshop sessions were lively because of the interactive format, which included multiple activities such as reading, discussing, planning, reporting, etc. Teachers were not passive participants. They were provided with information and were asked to meet and plan based on the information and their experiences. There were no pre-set behaviors or outcomes defined/described by the leader. Therefore, many of the participants' responses were

innovative once they met, developed actions, and developed their own OTL assessment strategies in the context of the topic presented.

How the Participants Rated/Evaluated the Workshop Sessions and Identified Obstacles to Ongoing Implementation

At the end of each workshop, the teachers and administrators were asked to rate their workshop experiences and to rate how teacher-friendly the OTL assessment strategy was after practicing it in the workshop. The findings about the workshop sessions from the evaluation forms ranged from *some teacher-friendly* to *much teacher-friendly*. No strategy was rated as *very much teacher-friendly*. At the final follow-up/feedback sessions, teachers indicated that working in small groups to learn how to implement the OTL assessment strategies was a valuable experience. Most teachers indicated that they would use all of the OTL assessment strategies in their classrooms. After reflecting, they found three strategies *very teacher-friendly*: Networking and collaborating, assessing students' mastery of skills, and conducting observations.

Table 1: Workshop participants' ratings of OTL Assessment Strategies

OTL Assessment Strategy	Mean Rating
Using Networking and Collaborating to Improve Instructional Practices	3.36
Keeping Journals	3.58
Assessing Students' Mastery of Skills and Concepts	4.07
Conducting Observations for Constructive Feedback	3.48
Conducting Surveys about Teaching Practices	3.89
Conducting Surveys about School Resources Needed for Effective Teaching	3.82

Note: Rating Scale: 1= Not At All Teacher-Friendly; 2 = Not Much Teacher-Friendly; 3 = Some Teacher-Friendly; 4 = Much Teacher-Friendly; and 5 = Very Much Teacher-Friendly.

The workshop participants identified the best and worst features of the OTL assessment strategies. They described the obstacles to the ongoing implementation of the OTL assessment strategies. Teachers said the greatest obstacle to the ongoing implementation of the strategies was that they were time-consuming. This was the same finding from the national survey (Stevens, et al., 1998). Specifically, keeping journals, conducting surveys, and networking and collaborating were all described as time-consuming. However, the positive analytical comments for supporting the implementation of networking and collaborating seemed to outweigh the negative comments (see Table 2).

Table 2. Workshop participants' citations of the best and worst features of the OTL Assessment Strategies

OTL Assessment Strategy	Best Feature	Worst Feature
1. Using Networking and Collaborating to Improve Instructional Practices	Sharing and gaining from each other's strengths and experience	Teaming with teachers of lesser experiences
	Finding areas of uniformity in their teaching	Finding time to meet
	Problem-solving through finding strategies to improve academic achievement	Resistance to change teaching practices and to accept new ideas
	Working as a team	
2. Keeping Journals	Opportunity to be reflective	Time consuming. Unwilling to write each day about progress
3. Assessing Students' Mastery of Skills and Concepts	Better knowledge of what students have and have not learned	Time spent testing instead of teaching
4. Conducting Observations for Constructive Feedback	Opportunity to discuss teaching strategies with colleagues	Dependent upon the rapport and trust between the

		observed and observer
	Opportunity to see different strategies	
5. Conducting Surveys About Teaching	Opportunity to collaborate about the results of survey	Time needed to conduct surveys
	Learn what is being done in the school	Unwillingness of teachers to listen to ideas of others
	Evaluate what is and is not being taught	

Teachers Implementing the Networking and Collaborating OTL Assessment Strategy

At one of the schools, the grade level chair for the third grade reported that her group had met to solve the problem of a very heavy work load. Apparently, instead of meeting to collaborate and network, they were working singularly. They solved their work load problem by agreeing to divide up the work. At their meetings, they agreed on what needed to be taught during a certain period of time. Then each teacher assumed the responsibility for preparing lessons and materials for one subject area: Teacher #1 was responsible for reading; teacher #2 for mathematics; and teacher #3 for English language arts. Also, they agreed to meet regularly to discuss and assess where they were going with their classes and the progress or problems that they needed to address. Teachers on several occasions wanted the workshop leader to remind their principals that they needed additional time for meeting and planning together.

This information was then shared with other workshop participants when the grade level chair reported it in her workshop session and the workshop leader reported it at other workshop sessions. The leader observed that the other workshop participants were excited about this way of using the collaboration and networking assessment strategy proposed by the grade 3 group. The leader described this division of work to the workshop participants as "working smart."

Feedback Sessions Provide Information about Ongoing Implementation of OTL Assessment Strategies

At the final workshop, teachers participated in a feedback session with the co-principal investigator. The faculty at each school rated the OTL assessment strategies along three dimensions: *not teacher-friendly*, *teacher friendly*, and *very teacher-friendly*. The results were that all of the strategies were at a minimum rated *teacher-friendly*. However, collaboration and networking were found to be the most important of the assessment strategies, and lack of time or limited time was viewed as the greatest deterrent to implementing the strategies. Teachers reiterated this finding in follow-up interviews with grade level chairs and three other teachers at each school. School principals when interviewed indicated that the workshops should have occurred at the beginning of the school year to better prepare teachers, rather than mid-year.

At the end of the five months of professional development, the teachers were asked to think about all of the OTL assessment strategies presented in the workshop sessions and again cite which ones were *not teacher-friendly*, *teacher-friendly* and *very teacher-friendly*. The researcher observed that the end-of-the-year results differed from earlier evaluations. On the several occasions when the OTL assessment strategies were evaluated, teachers found most of the strategies *teacher-friendly*. However, the specific results changed.

- Teachers reported that administrators' observations of teachers teaching, surveying teachers about their teaching practices, and networking and collaborating as a form of professional development were *very teacher-friendly* OTL assessment strategies.
- Teachers said that networking and collaborating was a form of professional development that was good because they were able to share information about successful teaching strategies used in classrooms and obtain good ideas about how to improve their teaching. The teachers noted a common concern about this strategy: There has to be a commitment of time.

OTL assessment strategies of interval testing/assessment, surveying teachers about resources needed for effective instruction, and keeping journals received mixed reactions, including *not teacher-friendly*, *teacher-friendly* and *very teacher-friendly* from the various feedback discussion groups. Those few strategies that were regarded by some teachers in their feedback discussion as *not teacher-friendly* were accompanied with suggestions to modify and make them more teacher-friendly.

Follow-up Interviews with School Principals, Teacher-Facilitators, Grade Level Chairs and Selected Teachers about Obstacles to Ongoing Implementation of the OTL Assessment Strategies

Telephone calls and visits to the schools were made in June 1998 to encourage principals to continue emphasizing the importance of implementing those OTL assessment strategies that the teachers viewed and evaluated as being useful/helpful to them. Teachers reported that networking and collaborating with each other was essential and the time needed for this strategy was a consistent message repeated by the teachers. When questioned about time for teachers to meet, principals indicated that teachers already had conference hours for meetings. However, the teachers at both schools indicated that the principals' scheduling decisions, sometimes caused by teacher absences, interrupted their opportunities to meet on a regularly scheduled basis.

Development of an OTL Assessment Strategies Implementation Checklist

The checklist was intended to be used in two ways: (1) for school staffs to do an implementation self-assessment; and (2) for the researcher to use as an interview protocol with school staffs. The assessment format covered the workshop activities. There was the expectation that teachers would follow the suggested OTL assessment strategies that were teacher-friendly during the school day, when and as needed. The rationale and format for the OTL assessment

implementation checklist followed the checklist rationale and format developed for the Adaptive Education Project (Wang, 1992).

The implementation checklist delineated the workshop dimensions and performance indicators were developed for each dimension. The opportunity to learn variables (content coverage, content exposure, content emphasis, and quality of instructional delivery) were determined to be the critical dimensions of the professional development workshops. The activities practiced in the workshop sessions and given as follow-up "homework" assignments became the performance indicators for each dimension. The responses to the indicators on the implementation checklist were divided into three categories: *yes* (implemented), *no* (not implemented) and *in progress*. The checklist was piloted; however, when the researcher attempted to use the checklist with teachers at the first school, it was discovered that the performance indicators were too detailed and, thus, too time-consuming. At that time, the researcher eliminated many of the indicators and selected only those indicators judged to be the most critical for providing information about ongoing implementation of the OTL assessment strategies. Using the revised implementation checklist, the teachers who were interviewed indicated that they were attempting to implement the OTL assessment strategies. This was verified by the school principals and teacher-facilitators when the researcher conducted follow-up interviews with them in June.

Principals' Management and Leadership Behaviors were Obstacles
to Implementation and Ongoing Implementation of OTL Assessment Strategies

Although both school principals espoused support of their teachers implementing OTL assessment strategies, their management and leadership styles sometimes proved to be a hindrance to effective implementation. One reason was that roles were not clearly defined. One principal welcomed the teacher-facilitator as an ally in improving instruction while another principal viewed the teacher-facilitator as a possible threat to her principalship. Mixed messages were being sent

and were not cleared up while the researcher was visiting the schools. It appeared to the researcher that both principals and teacher-facilitators together needed to address and plan for successful relationships and to set guidelines about how they were to work together to improve students' academic achievement.

The teacher-facilitator who felt that she was the acknowledged instructional leader by the teachers and had the passive acceptance of her role by the principal seemed to be much more comfortable in her role of providing assistance and facilitating the adoption of OTL assessment strategies in the school. The school principal had been an elementary teacher and an elementary school principal before being assigned to her present school. She was not threatened by the teacher-facilitator's presence in the school and appeared to value the teacher-facilitator as being knowledgeable about the elementary curriculum and practices. Thus, the principal relied on the teacher-facilitator's assistance. This may have been an obstacle to assessment implementation because it was the teacher-facilitator who attended all of the workshop sessions while the principal visited occasionally and did not stay throughout the session. The principal's lack of consistent attendance did not model for the teachers the importance of the workshop sessions.

The teacher-facilitator who was unsure of her role because of the principal's periodic resistance to her presence in the school felt uncomfortable in being a strong advocate for any kind of change. Instead, this teacher-facilitator took the safe road of responding only to requests for assistance but did not initiate assistance. The researcher observed that the principal of this school missed the opportunity to use a person who was knowledgeable about the elementary curriculum and practices. It appeared that the principal needed a planned partnership with the teacher-facilitator because the principal was learning about the elementary curriculum having previously worked at the secondary level. A partnership or team approach would have been much more

effective for the school and for the teachers within the school who wanted to implement the OTL assessment strategies and the ALEM model of school reform. In contrast to the first school, this principal modeled the importance of the workshops by attending all sessions and staying throughout the sessions. However, there were other underlying relationship problems with some of the teachers that diminished the impact of the principal's modeled message of support for the workshops to her staff.

Norm-referenced Test Scores for the Two Schools:

The Results of the Community for Learning Component—

ALEM and the OTL Assessment Workshops

Assessing students' mastery of skills and concepts was a popular session with the teachers because they wanted their schools to show improvement and move them out of a "worst schools" category. However, they were frustrated and angry with the D.C. school district because no workshops or materials about the Stanford 9 had been provided when this session was presented. The workshop leader stepped into the void and geared the sessions on students' mastery of skills and concepts to information about the Stanford 9. The workshop leader used the publishing company's Stanford 9 materials to show teachers how to plan to address the testing information for their school and to begin preparing an instruction level for the Stanford 9. Again, collaboration and networking was stressed as essential to implement the actions needed.

For the school year 1997-98, the two schools did improve in reading on the Stanford 9, almost reaching the median (50th percentile). One school's percentile score for Spring 1998 was 44, an increase of 14 points from the Fall 1997 score. The other school's percentile score was 47, an increase of 19 points from its Fall 1997 score. It should be noted that the scores for reading were only for those students who took the Stanford 9 in the fall and spring. In other words, these were the students who benefited from a complete year of instruction in the same school.

For the school year 1996-97, these same two schools showed improvement in reading but at lower levels than 1997-98. School #1's reading percentile score improved from 20 to 31, an increase of 11 points, while school #2 increased its percentile score from 32 to 42, an increase of 10 points. Another analysis of the Stanford 9 reading achievement test scores looked at the two different cohort groups' scores for Spring 1997 and Spring 1998. The two schools' reading percentile score increased by 13 and 5 percentile points, respectively.

Table 3. NCE and Percentile Reading Scores for 2 Schools, Fall 1996 and Spring 1997 and Fall 1997 and Spring 1998.

School		Fall 1996	Spring 1997	Diff.	Fall 1997	Spring 1998	Diff.
#1	%ile	20	31	11	30	44	14
	NCE	28.4	36.9	8.5	35.8	46.4	10.6
#2	%ile	32	42	10	28	47	19
	NCE	36.6	43.4	6.8	34.8	48.1	13.3

FINDINGS

Teachers rated all of the OTL assessment strategies as *teacher-friendly*. However, it was the networking and collaborating assessment strategy that captured the ongoing support of all teachers. In fact, teachers urged the workshop leader to remind the principals to keep their commitment to provide time for the teachers to meet regularly so that they could network and collaborate about instructional issues and practices in their schools.

Implementation of ALEM and the OTL assessment strategies were complementary to each other. Nothing in the OTL assessment strategies workshop was contradictory to ALEM model's practices and procedures. ALEM stressed that teachers needed to have team meetings while OTL

stressed the need to network and collaborate in small groups. While ALEM was more prescriptive about the teaching practices and room environment, the OTL assessment strategies encouraged teachers to think and choose the assessment actions they felt were appropriate, but to also include planning as a necessary component.

Levels of demonstrated leadership seemed to play an important role. There were higher achievement scores at the school where the principal and assistant principal were constant attendees at the workshop sessions in contrast to the school where the assistant principal attended no workshop sessions and the principal's attendance was brief and intermittent. Also, the teacher-facilitators proved to be quite valuable in providing instructional support to the teachers.

Whatever the "chemistry" or mixture of principal type, teacher-facilitators, and teachers, both schools improved in their reading percentile scores. The schools had improved in 1996-97, the year *prior* to the OTL assessment strategies workshops, but the amount of positive change was not as large as the year *of* the workshop (1997-98). In fact the increase in percentile scores in 1997-98 was almost double the amount of change in 1996-97 and the Spring 1998 scores for both schools differed by 5 points.

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